



**Government of the District of Columbia**  
**ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G**

CHEVY CHASE, BARNABY WOODS, HAWTHORNE

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**ANC 3/4G Resolution**  
**Requesting Changes to the Office of**  
**Planning's Proposed Amendments to the**  
**Comprehensive Plan**

1. At its October 28, 2019 meeting, the Commission created a Comprehensive Plan Task Force (<http://bit.ly/373tRj1>). The Task Force — which included four commissioners and seven constituents, including one small-business owner — was asked to make proposals for Commission comments on and requested changes to the Office of Planning's (OP's) recommended amendments to the District's Comprehensive Plan (<https://plandc.dc.gov>).
2. The Task Force held public meetings on November 12, 2019, November 21, 2019, December 2, 2019, December 16, 2019, and January 23, 2019. It also conducted an on-line survey with 682 respondents between December 2, 2019, and December 20, 2019, of residents in the ANC to obtain their views about issues raised by the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments. Based on public input and Task Force members' research and analysis, the Task Force prepared a Report and Recommendations (the "Report," available at <http://bit.ly/2RV5mPi>).
3. The Commission discussed the Report at its regularly scheduled and noticed public meetings on January 27, 2020, and February 10, 2020. Based on its review and discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in the Report, the Commission generally adopts it as the basis for its comments on and requested

changes to OP's proposed amendments.<sup>1</sup> This Resolution summarizes the most significant points and advice for changes that OP should make before sending the amendments to the Council. The Commission relies on the entire Report, however, as the basis for its comments and asks that OP consider the full Report as part of this resolution.

4. The Commission particularly emphasizes three key elements of the Report:
  - Our community needs more affordable housing that will promote income diversity and enrich our civic life;
  - Our neighborhood can and should accommodate population growth while also preserving its hallmark livability and assuring that new development has a compatible scale, function, and character with the surrounding structures; and
  - Our residents require increased infrastructure planning — especially for public schools and transportation — that specifies how the District will meet demands for the current and future population.
5. OP's proposed amendments will not further these objectives as effectively as the Commission believes is essential in the Comprehensive Plan.
  - While addressing affordable housing extensively, OP's changes are not likely to accomplish their target goals, are not tailored to the needs of our neighborhood, and will not provide a significant number of new affordable housing units without more focused, specific plans;
  - OP's blanket increases to the density designations along Connecticut Avenue, NW from Chevy Chase Circle to Livingston Street, NW — the Chevy Chase Gateway<sup>2</sup> — do not provide adequate guidance or specificity and will not give the community adequate input on questions of compatibility, scale, and character nor will OP's changes create a memorable entrance to the city that establishes the identity of the District;

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<sup>1</sup> The only significant difference between the Task Force Report and the Commission's resolution relates to OP's proposal to increase the density classification on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) along the Connecticut Avenue corridor. The Task Force Report states (at page 1) that "the Comprehensive Plan should not open the door to any action by the Zoning Commission for proposed changes along the Chevy Chase Gateway to the District without first completing a thorough, detailed 'Small Area Plan . . .'" The Commission Resolution (at paragraph 9) "supports OP's proposed changes" to the FLUM but "asks, however, that OP include a provision in the Comprehensive Plan that the Zoning Commission may not approve any proposed density changes until completion of a Small Area Plan."

<sup>2</sup> The Chevy Chase Gateway is the area along Connecticut Avenue, NW from Chevy Chase Circle to Livingston Street, NW.



- OP does not provide a plan for where new schools will be located to serve our neighborhood or how those schools will be funded to alleviate the already overcrowded elementary, middle, and high school facilities west of Rock Creek and to accommodate reasonable growth; and
  - OP has not accounted for current proposals that would eliminate some bus routes, remove some bus stops, and change the layout of Connecticut Avenue. These proposals, if implemented, could impact development and population growth and need to be considered in plans for the Chevy Chase Gateway.
6. The Commission urges OP to make the specific changes to its proposed amendments in paragraphs 7 through 16 below. Most importantly, the Comprehensive Plan should mandate a Small Area Plan for the Chevy Chase Gateway. Such a plan is particularly appropriate because the Chevy Chase Gateway requires more focused direction than can be provided by the Comprehensive Plan, and a Small Area Plan, approved by the Council, will help guide long-range development, improve our neighborhood, achieve citywide goals, and attain economic and community benefits.<sup>3</sup> The Commission is committed to working with the community and OP to complete the Chevy Chase Gateway Small Area Plan expeditiously so that any new development can be guided by this vision.
  7. To achieve the objectives outlined in the Report, the Commission asks OP to change the Generalized Policy Map (GPM) (<http://bit.ly/34T2eYI>) to designate the Chevy Chase Gateway as a Future Planning Analysis Area where
 

anticipated future planning efforts will be undertaken in the near term (1-5 years) to analyze land use and policy impacts, mitigate and incorporate anticipated growth, and help inform any significant zoning changes. The process should evaluate current infrastructure and utility capacity against the full build out and projected population growth, and include issues most relevant to the community that can be effectively addressed through a neighborhood planning process.<sup>4</sup>
  8. OP should expressly identify the Chevy Chase Gateway as an important entrance to the District and change Map 9-12 in the Urban Design Element (<http://bit.ly/2GnM0vD>) at page 28 to include the Chevy Chase Gateway. The Rock Creek West Area Element (<http://bit.ly/2JCgwnD>) should also be

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<sup>3</sup> See Section 2503 of the Implementation Element (<http://bit.ly/2Pt5BhZ>) at pages 5-6).

<sup>4</sup> Proposed Generalized Policy Map Legend (<http://bit.ly/34T2eYI>).

changed to describe the Chevy Chase Gateway in its discussion of the Connecticut Avenue Corridor (Section 2311) and should include a policy on Chevy Chase Gateway Enhancement — for instance,

Support community-led planning for enhanced retail and housing strategies in the Chevy Chase Gateway that will grow and strengthen the local businesses, continue to attract and serve local residents with new developments of compatible scale, function, and character with the existing neighborhood, improve income diversity by expanding affordable and workforce housing,<sup>5</sup> and establish a distinctive entrance to the city.

9. The Commission supports OP's proposed changes to the Future Land Use Map (<http://bit.ly/2JBLYfk>) that increase the planned density for the Chevy Chase Gateway. The Commission asks, however, that OP include a provision in the Comprehensive Plan that the Zoning Commission may not approve any proposed density changes until completion of a Small Area Plan. The Small Area Plan should be a prerequisite so that new development will be consistent with that Plan.
10. The Rock Creek West Area Element should be changed to require development of a Small Area Plan for the Chevy Chase Gateway that includes the following characteristics:
  - When there is construction of new mixed-use buildings — e.g., at the current Safeway and Wells Fargo bank buildings — they should be visually and physically compatible with existing buildings on Connecticut Avenue and should include significant affordable and workforce housing;
  - When there is new construction, it should respect the existing historic landmark structures on the west side of Connecticut Avenue (e.g., the Chevy Chase Arcade and the Avalon Theater) as well as the richness and diversity of the existing bungalows, kit houses, and other single-family houses and traditional apartment buildings in the area;
  - When there is new ground-floor retail, it should include varied pedestrian-scale facades to preserve the quality of individual, traditional “Main Street” storefronts, regardless of the building size;

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<sup>5</sup> The Mayor's Housing Equity Report (available at <http://bit.ly/2phiFxW>) uses the term “moderate-income housing” instead of “workforce housing.”



- Attractive streetscapes incorporating special paving, lighting, street trees, benches, and seasonal plantings;
- Incentives that encourage the retention of neighborhood-serving retail with particular emphasis on locally owned and operated small (“mom-and-pop”) businesses;
- Parking (including potentially underground) to support the commercial businesses and new residential development;
- Enhancement of the space around the Chevy Chase Public Library and the Chevy Chase Community Center to create an active public space;
- Modernization of the Chevy Chase Public Library to include mixed-use/co-location with affordable housing development;
- Green buildings with geothermal, solar, green roofs, rainwater capture, repurposed materials, etc.;
- Modernization of the bus depot site to serve as a station for a new shuttle connector to Metro, a location for local history and arts displays, retail pop-ups, potentially being incorporated into housing, etc.;
- Placemaking features including public art and interpretive signage that emphasize the history of the community, including its diverse roots (e.g., as reflected in the requested name change from Lafayette Park to Lafayette-Pointer Park); and
- Ensure new affordable and workforce housing in mixed-income developments is built at a level significantly above Inclusionary Zoning and Inclusionary-Plus Zoning and that such housing is offered on a first-priority basis to teachers, librarians, first responders, caregivers, etc., who work locally and whose salaries are publicly funded (i.e., workforce housing).

11. The Rock Creek West Area Element should include a policy statement that encourages and facilitates creative affordable housing solutions along the Chevy Chase Gateway. While traditional Inclusionary Zoning and Inclusionary-Plus Zoning can be one tool in creating affordable housing, it is not the most effective way to achieve the District’s ambitious goals in our area. The Plan should recognize this neighborhood’s opportunities and limitations by stimulating partnerships and coalitions of developers — non-profit and for-profit — and by acknowledging the need for significant District participation through contributions of its own resources (e.g., through the Housing Production Trust Fund or making public property available for affordable housing). The District’s policy for the Chevy Chase Gateway should be to use any value created by allowing greater density as an asset to ensure the fullest achievement of affordable housing objectives.

12. The Rock Creek West Area Element should include a policy that encourages development of affordable and workforce housing that is suitable for families and that is fully accessible to those with disabilities. The policy should also encourage and support development of resident-owned affordable and workforce housing so that residents retain a portion of the appreciation in value, but covenants should require that the units remain “affordable” for at least 15 years.
13. The Rock Creek West Area Element should include a policy that the District will use its publicly-owned property at the Chevy Chase Public Library for future development of a new library that also includes mixed-income housing, with emphasis on affordable and workforce housing and on housing for public employees (e.g., first responders, librarians, and teachers).
14. The Rock Creek West Area Element should include a policy to preserve rent-controlled units so that they are not redeveloped in a way that reduces the stock of housing that is effectively “affordable” — even if not defined as such — in order to create the false impression of having created additional units that are expressly income-restricted. The result of moving existing affordable housing from one column to another with no net gain means displacing one set of vulnerable residents for a more vulnerable group. Conversions of rent-controlled units are likely to take the pressure off building new affordable units, but achieve no real gain.
15. OP should restore the deleted section in the Rock Creek West Area Element that describes “Development Priorities,” including such issues as parking, schools, trees, and recreation facilities (Rock Creek West Area Element at pages 13-17). Residents identified those priorities in 2006, and the Commission’s survey of our community demonstrates that they remain important development priorities. Our residents priorities continue to be new development that is compatible with existing buildings, reducing traffic congestion, improving pedestrian safety, expanding commercial and residential parking, addressing overcrowding at public schools, and increasing affordable housing. While these priorities may be discussed elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan, they continue to be important planning considerations for this community. Failure to consider them expressly in the Rock Creek West Area Element, while simultaneously proposing increased density in the Chevy Chase Gateway, would be imprudent.
16. The Rock Creek West Area Element should include a policy that addresses the need for infrastructure — e.g., transportation, parks and recreation, libraries, utilities, and schools — that accommodates projected population growth. In particular, this Element must include a policy to create a specific plan for where, when, and how the District will locate, build, and fund public schools for the

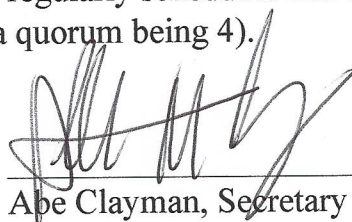


children in the Wilson High School Feeder Pattern so that new development and population growth will not exacerbate current school overcrowding. Rock Creek West is already confronting a crisis in school facility shortage, but the proposed Plan amendments do not specifically address where school capacity can be located or how it will be funded. It would be imprudent to proceed with the Plan's growth scenario while neglecting to address the hard questions about public schools and other necessary infrastructure.

17. The Commission urges OP to make these changes to its proposed amendments and to work with this Commission to implement the Chevy Chase Gateway Small Area Plan and the other policy provisions that we propose. The Commission and this community can be effective partners with OP to achieve the Comprehensive Plan's ambitious goals while maintaining and enhancing the livability and vitality of the Chevy Chase Gateway neighborhood.

Approved by ANC 3/4G after a discussion at its regularly scheduled and noticed February 10, 2020 meeting by a vote of 6 to 0 (a quorum being 4).

  
Randy Speck, Chair

  
Abe Clayman, Secretary

cc: Andrew Trueblood, Director, Office of Planning  
Council Chair Phil Mendelson  
Councilmember Mary Cheh  
Councilmember Brandon Todd  
Councilmember Robert White  
Councilmember Elissa Silverman  
Councilmember David Grasso  
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